CLAIM AMENDMENTS

IN THE CLAIMS

This listing of the claims will replace all prior versions, and listing, of claims in the application or previous response to office action:

1.　　**(Currently amended)** A method of providing a customer with updated wait time messages during a call to a call center, comprising the steps of:

receiving an incoming customer call;

~~at any time during the call, determining whether resources of the call center are available to further process the call;~~

~~if resources are available, continuing to process the call;~~

~~if resources are not available, placing the customer on hold;~~

calculating an expected wait time;

playing an initial voice message informing the customer of the expected wait time~~, the reason for the wait, and the operation of a wait time audio indicator that will indicate the progress of the wait time~~;

playing ~~the~~ **a** wait time audio indicator **wherein the wait time audio indicator comprises a audible signal having at least one parameter that varies with time, wherein a value of the parameter is indicative of a remaining wait time; and**

during the wait time, recalculating, at least once, the remaining expected wait time~~; and~~

~~during the wait time, providing the customer with at least one update voice message that informs the customer of the remaining expected wait time, using the results of the recalculating step~~.

2.　　**(Currently amended)** A method of providing a ~~customer~~ **caller** with updated wait time messages during a call to a call center, comprising the steps of:

~~receiving an incoming customer call;~~

at any time during ~~the~~ <u>a</u> call <u>**from a caller**</u>, determining whether resources of the call center are available to further process the call;

if resources are available, continuing to process the call;

if resources are not available, placing the ~~customer~~ <u>**caller**</u> on hold;

calculating an expected wait time; and

playing a wait time audio indicator <u>**comprising an audible signal having an audible characteristic that varies as a function of the expected wait time wherein an instantaneous value of the characteristic is indicative of the expected wait time**</u> ~~that indicates the progress of the expected wait time~~.

3.   **(Currently amended)** The method of Claim 2, further comprising the steps of, during the wait time, recalculating, at least once, the remaining expected wait time, and of providing the ~~customer~~ <u>**caller**</u> with at least one voice update message that informs the ~~customer~~ <u>**caller**</u> of the remaining expected wait time.

4.   **(Currently amended)** The method of Claim 3, wherein the providing step is repeated when the ~~customer~~ <u>**caller**</u> advances in a queue.

5.   **(Currently amended)** The method of Claim 3, wherein the voice update message is provided when a ~~customer~~ <u>**caller**</u> advances in a queue.

6.   **(Currently amended)** The method of Claim 3, wherein the voice update message is provided at ~~periodic~~ intervals during the hold.

7.   **(Currently amended)** The method of Claim 2, wherein the ~~wait time audio indicator is an audio signal that changes in~~ <u>**characteristic that varies is a**</u> pitch ~~during the progress of the wait~~ <u>**of the audible signal**</u>.

8.   **(Currently amended)** The method of Claim 2, wherein the ~~wait time audio indicator is an audio signal that changes in~~ <u>characteristic that varies is a</u> tone ~~during the progress of the wait~~ <u>of the audible signal</u>.

9.   **(Currently amended)** The method of Claim 2, wherein the ~~wait time audio indicator is an audio signal that changes in~~ <u>characteristic that varies is an</u> amplitude ~~during the progress of the wait~~ <u>of the audible signal</u>.

10.   (Original) The method of Claim 2, wherein the placing step is in response to a routing queue, and wherein the calculating step is performed by multiplying a queue length times an average wait time.

11.   **(Currently amended)** The method of Claim 2, further comprising the step of playing an initial voice message informing the ~~customer~~ <u>caller</u> of the expected wait time.

12.   **(Currently amended)** The method of Claim 11, wherein the initial voice message apprises the ~~customer~~ <u>caller</u> of the operation of an audio wait time indicator.

13.   **(Cancelled)**

14.   **(Currently amended)** The method of Claim 2, further comprising the step of recalculating the expected wait time and modifying the ~~audio~~ wait time <u>audio</u> indicator in response to the recalculating step.

15.   **(Currently amended)** An automated call center for processing customer calls, comprising:
        a call receiving unit for receiving telephonic input from a customer;
        a DTMF receiver for decoding DTMF signals input by the customer;

~~a voice recognition unit for decoding voice customer input;~~

~~a call processing unit for processing the calls;~~

a queue manager **for** ~~managing queues for resources of the system and for calculating~~ **operable to calculate an** expected wait time for customers on hold;

~~a message player for playing audio messages to the customer;~~

a wait message generator for generating voice wait time messages; and

a wait time audio generator for generating audio signals **having a substantially continuously audible characteristic that varies during a hold time wherein the value of the audible characteristic at any time is indicative** ~~that notify a customer of the progress~~ of the expected wait time ~~while that customer is placed on hold~~.

16.   (Original) The system of Claim 15, wherein the queue manager is further operable to update expected wait times during customer holds.

17.   (Original) The system of Claim 15, wherein the wait time audio generator generates an audio signal that changes in pitch during the progress of the wait.

18.   (Original) The system of Claim 15, wherein the wait time audio generator generates an audio signal that changes in tone during the progress of the wait.

19.   (Original) The system of Claim 15, wherein the wait time audio generator generates an audio signal that changes in amplitude during the progress of the wait.

20.   (**New**) The method of claim 2, wherein the audio signal comprises a non-speech signal.

21.   (**New**) The method of claim 20, wherein the audio signal characteristic is substantially continuously audible and varies as a function of the expected wait time.